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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 004236

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DEPARTMENT FOR TASK FORCE ONE

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TAGS: [IS](#) [IZ](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TFLE01: TURKEY: ISRAELI ACTIONS TRANSLATE INTO
WIDESPREAD PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR EARLY ACTION AGAINST THE PKK

REF: ANKARA 04162

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The combination of Israel,s actions in Lebanon, USG support for Israeli,s right to self defense, increased PKK-related violence in Turkey, and USG opposition to a Turkish cross-border action (CBO) against the PKK in northern Iraq has created a public opinion pressure cooker in Turkey. As a result, the PM Erdogan,s Justice and Development Party (AKP) government is under enormous pressure from all sides to take concrete steps to counter PKK-related violence. End summary.

¶2. (C) AKP whip and Ankara MP Salih Kapusuz, a reliable and longtime Embassy contact, reflected both party and public opinion in a July 19 conversation with us. Currently, Kapusuz said, Israel is killing peace and chances for peace. It was wrong for Hizbullah to kidnap the two soldiers, but Israel,s attacks on infrastructure and civilians are the biggest blow to the peace process. The Turkish public, he stated, did not welcome President Bush,s remarks on the Israeli attacks because they appeared one-sided. Although the public generally has little sympathy for Russia, people were attracted to Putin,s words. The U.S. must, he said, exert more pressure for peace.

¶3. (C) He offered one anecdote to illustrate that for Turks --- even at the village level --- the Israeli-Lebanese conflict has direct meaning at home. At a recent meeting with muhtars (elected village leaders) and local citizens, a forum that normally focus on local infrastructure issues, a muhtar stood up and told Kapusuz, "Our problems can wait. We will deal with them eventually. Right now we see what Israel has done for two kidnapped soldiers and we draw our lesson. We are willing to go hungry, but do something about terrorism."

¶4. (C) Kapusuz said that as a result of the combination of the Israeli incursion, the 18 Turkish security personnel killed by PKK terrorists in recent days, and pressure from all segments of the population, the GOT had to issue strong statements. It became a political imperative. He offered

further context: large amounts of explosives are coming into Turkey via Iraq. In just the past week, he related, Turkish authorities have confiscated 207 kg of plastic explosives, 28 kg of TNT, and 83 hand grenades.

15. (C) AKP leaders have talked to all political parties, Kapusuz added, especially the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP). All agree this is a national issue and they are with the government to the end.

16. (C) As if to illustrate the point, True Path Party (DYP) chairman Mehmet Agar, Motherland Party (ANAP) chairman Erkan Mumcu, and CHP parliamentary group leader Ali Topuz all called this week for the government to consider a military operation in northern Iraq against the PKK. Agar asserted, "If Turkey's diplomatic initiatives do not produce the desired results," the GOT should have the courage to exercise its right to a cross border operation under international law. Agar also emphasized that political opposition stops at the nation's borders. ANAP's Mumcu said that Turkey should take measures to show that its patience has run out and it will prevent the PKK from using northern Iraq as a base for operations against Turkey. He added that Turkey should not wait for other countries to provide for its security. CHP's Topuz stated, "Terrorism is not based on domestic problems. It is supported by certain foreign countries that seem friendly to us."

17. (C) Bahdir Koc, an analyst with the ASAM think tank, told us that Turkey has been waiting for 40 months for the U.S. or Iraq to do something about the PKK; nothing concrete has happened. AKP's Kapusuz emphasized to us several times that

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the Turkish public seeks a "serious gesture" from the U.S. regarding PKK safe havens in northern Iraq, but that it would not take more than that to satisfy them that the US is a serious partner and ally. National Security Council staffer Kenan Ipek told us that the U.S. needs to do something concrete and visible on the PKK in northern Iraq. The Turkish state understands our constraints, but rhetoric is no longer sufficient, he stated.

18. (C) Turkish MFA First Secretary Aziz Sevi, German Marshall Fund director in Turkey Suat Kiniklioglu, and a number of other interlocutors shared with us similar explanations regarding mounting Turkish frustration. Sevi and Kiniklioglu reminded us that every week Turks watch TV coverage of funerals for Turkish soldiers who died fighting the PKK. They see images of crying mothers and fatherless children. Turkish families with young men of military age are worried that their sons will be sent to the southeast and die fighting against the PKK.

19. (C) Everyone with whom we spoke sees a direct link between American involvement in Iraq and a rise in PKK violence in Turkey. This, they said, combined with the lack of concrete U.S. actions against the PKK in northern Iraq and U.S. opposition to a CBO contributes to the rise in anti-Americanism in Turkey.

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